

**Ep #364: Becoming a Student of Your Own Art With  
Terry Bradford-Crane**

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**Alan Moore**

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**Narrator:** Welcome to your community of fee-for-service financial advisors who are successfully building profitable firms that serve the next generation of clients. You'll learn from innovative advisors whose unique stories will inspire you to dream big and take action on your goals. Are you ready to live your great life and help clients live theirs? Then you're in the right place.

**Alan Moore:** Hello and welcome to this episode of radio. I'm your host, Alan Moore, and I'm excited to welcome member Terry Bradford-Crane on the show today. Terry went to the Naval Academy for college with a dream of becoming a pilot and an astronaut. Just as she was finishing her training program, the US repealed a law prohibiting women from serving in combat zones, and she was one of the first women to receive orders to serve on an aircraft in a combat zone. Her first job out of the military was with Merrill Lynch, and she talked about how valuable the four years she spent there was for her career, mainly based on their amazing training program. After the birth of her second child, she decided to be a stay at home mom. And during that time she got her MBA in financial planning, her CFP designation, and was providing financial education and literacy programs and was an adjunct professor and more. In 2019, she decided to focus more on her financial planning business and started to scale. She shared how once COVID hit her and her husband ended up starting a business to support test pilots, which is her husband's career, and that it took her focus away from her planning firm while they were growing that business. Most recently, however, she's been focused on her planning practice and become super intentional about her time and priorities to ensure the right work gets done. I was really impressed with her intentionality and she shared her goals for the business and how it will ultimately support her and her husband as they transition into the next phase of their lives. Without further ado, here is my interview with Terry.

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**Alan Moore:** Feeling inspired to start your own RIA and wondering what it takes? XYPN has created a comprehensive step-by-step guide to starting *your firm on your terms*. It covers **all** the bases so you can confidently navigate from where you are to where you want to be. Unlike any other roadmap to independence out there, it includes templates, tools and insights from XYPN members who've been there, done that successfully. It promises to help get you from dreaming to doing. Check it out at: [info.xyplanningnetwork.com/myfirm](http://info.xyplanningnetwork.com/myfirm)

**Alan Moore:** Hey Terry, welcome to the show. Thanks so much for being on.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Thank you for having me.

**Alan Moore:** I am super excited to, to explore your career history, which is just fascinating in reading your bio and learning more about you and, and share that with listeners and sort of what led you to, to becoming a financial planner and running your own firm.

So, just by way of background, sounds like you are, like, several of our recent guests have actually been academy graduates. I don't know why we, we've sort of had a, had a string, but, so you went to the Naval Academy, correct

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** I did. The wonderful class of 1990 as I date myself. But yes, I did get to go to the United States Naval Academy.

**Alan Moore:** What, what ultimately drove your decision to go to, to an academy for college?

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** So for me, quite honestly, it was a matter of wanting to be in the military and not being able to afford anything else and understanding—being smart enough to know I didn't want to be in debt.

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So, but ultimately I, I did, I wanted to be in the military. And after talking too much in class one day, found out that my professor in high school was a blue and gold officer and offered say, "Don't enlist in the Air Force. Why don't you become an officer?"

And, and that's kind of how I got started on that path. I wanted to be an astronaut.

And since and be a pilot. And so since the first astronauts were Navy and Marine Corp pilots, I said, "Well, then I need to go to the Naval Academy." And so that's kind of how that worked out.

**Alan Moore:** That's amazing. My, my brother wanted to fly as well, and so he, he tried to get into the Air Force Academy, but when his appointment came through, it came for the Naval Academy.

Which I don't even think anyone told him like, "Hey, you, you, instead of Colorado Springs, you may end up in Maryland." But, but yeah, I mean, that is like, I think the Naval Academy is still listed as the hardest school to graduate from because it is essentially Ivy League academics while also being the Ivy League equivalent of physical, constant exercise and movement and, and, and that sort of thing.

So, I'm just curious, like what, what, I guess what do you feel like was in yourself to be able to, to not only survive but thrive in that environment? Because a lot of people don't make it. I mean, the select make it in and then the select make it out.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right. To thrive in that environment. Well, not wanting to be where I was. I did grow up on the lower end of the economic spectrum in this, in this country, and I wanted, at that time, I wanted to fly. I wanted to be an astronaut and I knew I had the wherewithal to make it academically. I was a varsity athlete throughout high school, so that kind of

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helped in terms of the physical side of it, but really just understanding where I was going.

For me as an African American woman, understanding where I was and that this was an opportunity to, to elevate myself economically and I wanted to be an officer. I enjoyed the leadership. I enjoyed understanding that to be a good leader you had to understand how to be a good follower. And, and back then I was much more black and white about a lot of things.

So, so that kind of helped me. A bit. But I just knew I wanted more than what I had. I wanted to be in the military and I wanted to be an astronaut and that fit the bill. And also for me, academically and financially, it wasn't—and even in terms of family support—it wasn't so far away. I mean, I applied to the Air Force Academy also.

I did get an appointment there also. And for me, understanding where I was coming from culturally, it just made more sense for me to go to the Naval Academy because the, of the issues I mentioned before, but it was only an eight hour bus ride away from home.

So I knew I was, that was an additional pressure on my family I didn't have to worry about.

So there were several reasons, but I enjoyed it and it was turned out to be the best academy, so there you have it.

**Alan Moore:** There you go. Heard it from the, the source. So tell me about, I mean ultimately you had this dream of, of being a pilot and being a, an astronaut, which I know that that dream is probably what held, held things together at times. Tell me about your path to becoming a pilot then.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Well, that was quite interesting. I have to be very specific. I wasn't necessarily a pilot. I ultimately ended up being a naval

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flight officer because I did not have 20/20 vision. And so our junior year at the academy, you have something called service selection and I was able to select naval flight officer at that time cause I didn't have the, the vision, and was carted off to Pensacola, Florida, where I went through flight training.

And, that was an adventure. And ultimately by the time I finished flight training and was ready to transition to my ultimate aircraft, the government was talking about repealing the combat exclusion laws. so by time I—

**Alan Moore:** Women couldn't go to combat at the time.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** That's right. That's right. And they started sort of chipping away at different billets, different warfare specialties.

And ultimately, by the time I finished training in my aircraft in April, May of 2000, or excuse me, 1993, the law was removed. And I, my direct orders from training were to a, a tactical aircraft squadron. So that was...

**Alan Moore:** So they trained you to be a pilot, even though it was going to be illegal to send you into combat, like you were going to, or, or they were trained, you be a, I'm sorry, a flight officer, but you, you wouldn't actually be able to serve in, in the combat situation. That's a really, you think they were just preparing that like they thought the law was going to get repealed or was there, there was a, a way for you to still be able to serve and provide value, even if they wouldn't let you in combat situations.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right. Well, absolutely. Women have been flying military aircraft since World War II. And so the idea of being in the aircraft and flying, being associated with a military aircraft like WASPs, the Women's Auxiliary Service Pilot program, that was not new, but notice I said the word "auxiliary."

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So there were support roles for us as women. There were support roles flying actual fighter aircraft or being naval flight officers in fighter aircraft, but those aircraft were in support roles. Right, so they weren't forward deployed. Does that make sense? And so when, so there were actually women who were, had been in naval aviation longer than me and Air Force Aviation who had been flying, just not sent on an aircraft carrier and forward deployed into combat zones.

And that's what that law changed for us.

**Alan Moore:** Okay, that makes sense. And so you were one of the first women then to be deployed to an air, I mean, to an aircraft carrier headed into combat situation. So what was that like?

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** It was interesting, you know, during that time there was a bit of pushback from various people in terms of whether or not women should be in combat roles. And, and I can honestly say I could validate all of those reasons. I may not be able, I may not agree with all of them, but I can validate them. And so between being a woman and then of course adding on top of that African American woman, I was sort of infiltrating, if you will, a white male fraternity of sorts, but there were enough people at many different levels of the government who supported it.

And sometimes support was very difficult to find at my level, but I did find it in certain individuals and managed to successfully finish my, my, my tour with a combat squadron and got great orders after that and, and finished out my time that I was in the military on a successful note.

**Alan Moore:** That's absolutely incredible. It, it's impossible for me to understand what that was like and the grit and the determination that it takes to ultimately persevere and, and, and thrive in that environment. So at some point along the way, when, when you didn't test for 20/20 vision,

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did that, did that ultimately force you to give up your dream of, of becoming an astronaut? Or was that still alive at that point?

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Actually, it was still alive at that point and then, you know, as you get older and you experience life, you start to really kind of develop your priorities. And for me, before I had finished my first combat tour, I had gotten married and decided that there were things I wanted in life and for me there was this sort of transition.

I was very observant. And just as a quick backstory, you know many times at the academy, and you may have heard the stories going into your sophomore, junior, senior year, you do training. And at the time that I was doing training, I saw women who were senior military officers, but I seldom saw women who were both successful moms, wives in a great, awesome covenant relationship with their spouse, right, and successful military officers in a warfare specialty.

So whenever I went someplace, I saw a woman who was a general unrestricted line officer who was great—that's mostly the logistics or the administrative side of service—I saw more of that, but those women were single, single moms, divorced, and that doesn't mean that that's what it was across the board, but that's what I saw.

Right, and I thought to myself, "I don't want that. I want all of it. So how do I have all of it?"

And my father-in-law told me later in life, he goes, "You can have it all, but you can't have it all at once." So, so I, I, so as I neared the end of my my first stretch of, you know, eight years, I decided that this has been an awesome adventure and I'm going to move on to something different.

And that's kind of how that, but I'm still a nerd, or at least I try to be, try.

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**Alan Moore:** So what was your next step after, after, you know, getting out of the military?

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** So for me, I, you know, decided, well, what, what is it I want to do? And came across an individual who was a recruiter for Merrill Lynch, and I decided to, well, I'll give that a try; I'll see what that's like. Which is fascinating because I really was what I would call the true example of someone who was educated but had zero financial literacy.

And I decided to become a financial advisor. And, so I, I kind of made that transition. And over that period of time, near, after about four or five years successfully, went through their training program, and by the time I found out I was pregnant with my second child, I decided that I was going to stay at home.

But I went through the program and quickly realized that Merrill at the time had an incredible training program and felt very fortunate to have started there. And gave up my book of business after four years and decided to, to stay home, but that was kind of how I got into the financial services business.

I do believe that I did learn through that process that I was not the kind of person who wanted to cold call.

**Alan Moore:** Mm-hmm.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** And that—

**Alan Moore:** All it was back then.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** That's exactly right. It was, you know, you hear the stories of pick up the phone book and start in the age, you know what I mean? And it wasn't that bad. As a matter of fact, Merrill Lynch at that time

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had really started transitioning and, and encouraging their brokers to get either the certified financial management designation, kind of the mini CFP®, or the CFP®.

And so as I was transitioning out of Merrill Lynch, that's what was going on at the time, but I didn't like the idea of trying, trying to just sell securities.

**Alan Moore:** Sure. No, that makes sense.

Now while you made the transition to be a stay-at-home mom, it sounds like you ultimately did a lot in addition to parenting. You know, from a career perspective, can you talk about some of the things that you, you know, where you chose to spend your time and energy during that time period?

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right. So aside from the many hats that you wear as a stay-at-home parent, I actually ran for office at one point. I had actually previous clients, Merrill clients, contact me and want me to give presentations. So I ended up doing pro bono presentations and, and that is kind of how Bradford Company was initially set up.

Just kind of a way to keep, stay out of trouble with the, with the regulatory organizations, right, so that I could do the pro bono presentations. I volunteered for different boards for different programs like Women's Economic Ventures, helping business owners understand what they needed to do to set themselves up financially, both as a business owner and as, you know, individuals.

I also decided to get my MBA so I went to California Lutheran University and wanted to get an MBA and the only thing that they offered at that time online was an MBA in financial planning. I was like, "Well, how fortuitous?"

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So I did that and actually spent some time after that, a few years after getting my master's degree, they asked me to come back and teach statistics and or financial principles and policies. And as much as I loved statistics, I said, "I'm going to stay away from that and teach financial principles and policies." So I did that for a few years as an adjunct professor and just sort of immersed myself in trying to help my community on that aspect of it, you know.

Even up to now, I do merit badges for personal management for Boy Scouts. So anything that I could do to help educate the community and, and, and at that time in particular, stay-at-home moms; help them understand what was going on with the finances. That is, is what I did. I worked with youth groups, and just trying to plant those seeds early.

And I sort of developed this passion for teaching even before I became an adjunct. Just teaching people and watching the light come on to help them be prepared because not everybody's going to be fortunate enough to go to something like the United States Naval Academy or one of the other service academies, or have their education completely paid for.

So how do you get your financial literacy mindset going early? So you can not love money, but understand that it is a tool so that you can—it offers you an opportunity to make decisions, right? You're never backed into a corner. So that's what I did on the business side of it. While I was home, I stayed busy.

**Alan Moore:** Absolutely. Sounds like you were juggling multiple jobs all at once. at what point did Bradford-Crane, like when did your company become registered? Like as an RIA?

Did that happen early on or did that happen later?

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**Terry Bradford-Crane:** It did. It actually, like I said, even though in the very beginning, back in 2004 is when I established the company, right.

**Alan Moore:** And you established it as an RIA?

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right, but in California, so I wasn't generating any real revenue. Like I said, it really was a matter of trying to stay out of trouble.

**Alan Moore:** Yep.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Literate enough to know that I don't want to be in trouble.

But in terms of becoming a, an entity that I really wanted to try to make money and turn a profit, I would say that was more so in 2020. So throughout those years where my primary job was to, to, to take care of my kiddos and my family and my house, it was sort of lying dormant. And I was in California and I moved to Washington State in 2017 and really started to invest in the company as a profiting enterprise in 2020.

**Alan Moore:** Okay, so yeah, so it was 16 years that you had an RIA, somewhat dormant, but also there to, again, to protect you in the possibility that you accidentally give investment advice from stage and such.

So that, that makes a lot of sense. Tell me about Allied Approach Group, which is a, a company that, that you co-founded.

Tell me just about the company and, and sort of the work you do there.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right. So Allied Approach Group came about as a necessity, quite honestly. My husband is a test pilot. He's an experimental test pilot, and throughout the beginning of COVID-19, you know, things

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were tough financially and many companies were cutting back on research and development. And so his company where he worked offered him an opportunity to become an independent contractor.

But they were terms that I was smart enough to know were not good. So we took our toys and we started our own company. And quite honestly, Allied Approach Group sort of developed and was dormant for years, and then back in 2021 we decided, "Yeah, let's, let's do this." And so I became the financial officer.

I actually am a majority owner of that particular company, and what we do is we offer human resources support, and more so personnel support in engineering, consultation support, flight test support, instrumentation support for experimental projects. And so, for instance, one project we worked on was Eviation's Alice aircraft.

I don't know, a few, back in September was the first flight of the all-electric aircraft. It was twin engine, electric soup to nuts, in Moses Lake, Washington. Well, that was our project. And so these are the kinds of things we do. We resource and, and subcontract to other pilots, other instrumentation engineers, and we support flight test projects.

And, and that had a wonderful year and I was very excited about that. But it really opened my eyes—to kind of segue back to financial planning—what our clients are going through as business owners. You know, there's the, the new commercial out where you see the person, the big stack of sticky notes, putting sticky notes on everything that the business owner has to do.

And I act, I had to actually experience that as a, as an owner of, of an organization that combined efforts of several subject matter experts who didn't understand, fully, the risks to individuals or companies when coming up with novel ideas. And so I was the insurance person, I was the legal person, I was the IT person, I was the HR person.

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I set up the 401ks for us. And, and so it was an in-depth exercise in not only setting up our business, but understanding what our clients are going through. It's one thing to be able to answer the question on a test. It's another thing to understand all of the different resources you need to tap into to get to the correct answer and keep everybody out of trouble and alive for what we were doing, so.

**Alan Moore:** Yeah. There, there's extra, extra level of table stakes in, in that line of work compared to what, what I do, what, what we do as financial planners.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Mm-hmm.

**Alan Moore:** So you've listed about, I don't know, 10 different jobs now that, that you currently have where, you know, I mean, and, and—I don't say that in jest—cause you mentioned earlier to me that you're a taekwondo mom, you're doing all this pro bono work with the Boy Scouts, and presentations, and there's two companies. And like, how are you managing your time? Like how do you, how do you approach time management?

Because that is, that's more than it seems like two people could do, or three people, much less just one. So, just talk to me about how you're managing and prioritizing your time with all of this.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Mm-hmm. Well, I think one of the things that I mentioned earlier when we spoke and when I spoke to other folks at XYPN is that I had to be okay with my financial planning business taking a backseat. So I was still involved in financial planning because I was doing it for Allied Approach Group and I was doing it for my family.

And quite honestly, I even gave a presentation at a symposium for test pilots to teach them what they needed to do as working in a gig economy,

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how do you set yourself up for success? But it has been a humbling process, Alan, because like you mentioned, I was dormant for about 16 years really, and then I had an opportunity to really take off and I had to step back, and so I managed my time by looking at the priority.

You know, there's this sort of illustration that you'll hear aviators talk about, about having a bucket of tasks and the most important tasks are at the bottom of the bucket. And then as your bucket fills up, the stuff that's not as important kind of falls off to the wayside and you're, you're okay because the core tasks are being handled.

And that's kind of what I had to do. It was directed by what my priorities were, and as a result, what I'm finding is that I'm actually attracting clients who are also like that.

**Alan Moore:** Hmm.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** And I'm very honest with them about whatever my timeline might be. And last year I had a great opportunity to talk to Arlene, and I was like, I was like, "Arlene, I'm dying here. I have got so many people who want to work with me and I'm so blessed, so I don't want to complain, but I just, I, I can't, I got to..." She says, "Make a wait list. Make a wait list. Stick to your priorities, but make a wait list so that you can be honest and sincere and true to your, to your potential clients."

And so I did that. I create wait lists. I create time to, to just be down. Though it can be very painful. Like I told you, I took a week off to go celebrate with a daughter who just graduated from college. And so that is really what I've had to do. I've had to just keep my priorities mine, create a wait list, and take care of myself.

I take care of myself by kicking things and people so.

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**Alan Moore:** Nothing better than that. and shout out to Arlene Moss, who's the executive business coach here at, at XYPN. And, and yeah, she has a gift for hearing all the stress and just being like, "Well, here, like, have you thought about this thing?" It's like, "Oh my gosh, how did I, how? Like, oh yes, that's exactly what I need to do."

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right.

**Alan Moore:** So let's talk about sort of the ramp up of your planning firm, cause it sounds like 2019, 2020 you started to push into it and then COVID-19 happened.

And so, but tell me about the pre-COVID-19 sort of time period and, and I guess just what it, what it looks like for you to start leaning into the financial planning business more and, and begin to, to start ramping.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Okay. So what I really had to do during that time was I would say probably like 2018, mid-2018, I had to take a step back and look at how I was going to reach out and let people know I was in the community, right? And so what I did was I, I started a website. I started a blog because I loved writing about things.

You know, I would drive around with my kids and I would hear things. I'd hear stories on the radio and or watch the news, and I'm like, "Somebody needs to write an article about that. Somebody needs to research that so that it can be real and relatable to the average person who may or may not be financially literate."

Right? So I started the blog, [pieceofmindwaypoints.com](http://pieceofmindwaypoints.com), so I started doing that. I also connected with another financial planning firm locally and said, "Hey listen, this is what I'm trying to do. Do you, have you considered working with somebody who is exclusively a financial planner?" So I tried doing that.

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I also spent time offering my services as a guest speaker. So if some, and I, and I would do it for a minimal amount just to get myself out there and in front of folks, but I found that really writing and creating a blog and, and researching information made me better prepared to field, gather clients because I had something to, to talk about.

It was fascinating. I remember talking with a— it wasn't Rotary—it may have been a Rotary group, but I had been invited to an online meeting with them, and I remember telling them this whole COVID-19 thing is going to last a while. This is right after we shut down. And just planting those seeds in different places with people of influence within my community sort of helped me get my name out there.

So while I'm in the negative cash flow phase, I'm doing things that don't cost money. And, and that's kind of how it started.

**Alan Moore:** You said you had you moved to Washington State, so this was a fairly new community for you anyway.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right. It was new community. The people up here did not know me as the crazed woman in the excursion, you know, with the kids—dropping 'em off, picking 'em up, going—it's like they didn't, they didn't know me.

So up here I had to kind of re-establish, re-establish myself. And that's just kind of, you know, how I did it. Cause I was like, "Oh, I don't know anybody to really network." I did stay involved with FPA. Absolutely, and, and I bit the bullet and I went negative cash flow initially and, and got involved with XYPN because, as I mentioned probably before in conversations, I just didn't have the bandwidth to make sure that I was using all of the platforms in a compliant manner.

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And I didn't need that headache, right? So let's just join XYPN and dive in. And that's essentially what happened.

**Alan Moore:** Okay. That's awesome. So yeah, so you're, you're getting going, you're meeting a lot of folks, COVID-19 is happening. You know, your other business is, is ramping, so you're really busy there. And so, yeah, I guess, so simultaneously, were you doing planning for clients and that was just sort of starting to grow and, and becoming overwhelming just from a, from a capacity standpoint, it sounds like.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right. And during that time where I was ramping up, there were two other things that I did that I think were very, very helpful. Helpful. One thing that I did was before we had to go completely virtual, I actually became a coach for Dave Ramsey.

**Alan Moore:** Okay.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** So I did that for a while and actually, sort of aside from the teaching virtually, used that platform to not only help other people, but sort of work on my presentation chops for, for financial literacy issues.

Right? So I did that, and then also there were a few friends who I said, "Hey, listen, you know, I know you're going through some stuff. Why don't you let me do some pro bono plans for you?" So I did pro bono plans for them, which were pretty extensive, soup to nuts, and had them go through the whole process of signing the documents, like the whole thing.

Right. They were clients of mine. And then I also worked with FPA, journaling the rounds. So I was a, a co-host for those, a moderator for those, which also helped me meet other individuals in the business that I eventually worked with. Later I worked with Annalee Kruger on her elder planning specialist program.

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So all of those things sort of helped.

**Alan Moore:** So, yeah, you really put yourself out there and did a lot of different things in order to meet a lot of folks and got some reps as a financial planner and, and had some people, who you trusted, go through your planning process and probably give some feedback about the different steps and be sure, you know, it is terrifying the first time you put somebody through that process.

It's such a good process and you realize it's really not. And it's got to be constantly updated and iterated on.

So fast forward a little bit. You know, you've, you've met all these folks. Things you're starting to grow, like, where ultimately, you know, you said you got so busy that you ultimately went on a wait list.

Like where, where did you see success in terms of those clients finding you? Like how, how were they ultimately finding you for financial planning services?

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** They were, quite honestly, they were finding me through the XYPN portal.

**Alan Moore:** Mm-hmm.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** And the FPA portal. I also signed up for the Foundation of Financial Planning to do pro bono work that way also. So I did actually have an opportunity to connect with a Seattle financial planner and do some pro bono work for, for someone there.

So, but that's essentially where they come from because I did not advertise. I think the only real advertising per se that I did was, you know, I put up a couple of quick advertisements on Facebook and on LinkedIn

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about how I was doing the Ramsey thing, but other than that, I didn't do any advertising.

And so what really started happening and why there was the need for that wait list was because as people were getting referred to me, I was also working on Allied Approach Group. And so, like you said, it's, I mean, just having the two jobs right, and trying to keep things straight in my head. It it, it just was too much.

And so that's, at that point when I had to talk to Arlene, I'm like, "Give me, I need something. What do I do?" "How about a wait list?" Right? And I found that because of my efforts in—what I like to think is quality work that I presented to clients or what people heard about me, or maybe the, the bio—people wanted to wait.

They were willing to wait. And then they would call me back, "Hey, how far along are we on the, on the list?" Which was a good thing. And I had to be okay with slowing down because there were opportunities, there were opportunities for other podcasts, there were, but I would not have been able to turn in quality work.

And I think that's one way to, to sync yourself, right, is, is to turn in terrible work. So, so I just, I took the break.

**Alan Moore:** So, fast forward to today, what percentage of your time is spent on the financial planning business, and then what percentage of your time is, is maybe in, in Allied Approach Group, and then sort of the rest of, of your various, time commitments.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right. So right now I would probably say 90% of my time doing business work is my financial planning firm. So I've able, I've been able to kind of come back full service, which is the beauty of this business.

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If you're, if you are your own person, right? If you are not working for somebody else, excuse me, as an entrepreneur, you, you can—for me now, this is just me—I was able to be flexible and do what my family needed when they needed it. And there aren't too many professions where you can do that. You're your own boss.

And so right now I'm back to, you know, 90% financial planning and I'm able to manage my time with my business and my family the way that I want to.

Allied Approach Group is wonderful and it goes and fits and starts, right, as projects go. But that's probably the percentage I would say now.

**Alan Moore:** You're right that it is, the beauty of this of this profession, particularly if you own your own businesses and, and sort of have built a, a very successful job for yourself is that ultimately you can ramp up, ramp down when something comes in from Allied Approach Group and you're like, "Oh goodness, for the next quarter, I'm going to be buried over there. Okay, well, we're not taking new clients the next quarter in order to give myself some space." You really have that flexibility. Obviously that flexibility starts to go down a little bit as you sort of fill up from a client perspective. But even then, it's really the time intense part is onboarding new clients.

Once they're onboarded-

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** It is, oh.

**Alan Moore:** -you know, that it's so interesting that the, the real value add is in subsequent years, but then the, but that's also the lower time commitment. Talk to me a little bit about your financial planning service model, cause you do not manage investments.

Correct.

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**Terry Bradford-Crane:** No, no, I do not manage investments and for that very reason, pardon me, I don't manage my investments. And my husband's so funny. He's like, "You should really start managing investments." I'm like, "Are you kidding me? I've got free time between 2:30 and 2:45 in the morning. What were you more from me?"

But you know, we laugh and joke about that, but I don't manage investments because I remember, and I understand, that you need to be on point for the market. And because I do comprehensive planning, I need to be on point for my client's needs and understanding and for their literacy and developing action plans. And, and those are things that I call them living, breathing documents, right? That can change, but I don't have to be whipsawed by what's going on with the market, and I don't have to receive calls of somebody out of breath, which I did all the time at Merrill Lynch about what's going on in the market.

So I frame my service for them in that you're here because I think I'm an educator at heart, but what I want to do is help you become financially literate so you can be empowered. And so we are going to develop a conversation, a document that's a conversation about what your needs are, what your wants are, and how we can kind of marry them with the assets that you're bringing to the table.

And so that is what I am offering people. And you know, it's interesting you said that the onboarding is what really takes time. For me, what takes time, and maybe I have the model wrong, but for me, what takes time is really essentially creating a research paper for my clients.

**Alan Moore:** Sure.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right? So because I'm not just typing in numbers and then spitting out a report and here's this, you know, here's what you have.

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So that is really sort of the time intensive part for me, but that is what I'm offering. And then they can choose to either take the document and go forth, or they can hire me based upon a subscription model.

And I, the way I explain it to them is like, "Look, you know, you pay the fee once a month and if anything comes up, then you can call me and we can work on it. Unless there's a real material change in your financial situation that requires a whole new plan, you're not going to get the big fee anymore. So, and you may have to after three years."

I mean, I'm very honest about that. And so I have clients who do that, and they call me up and they say, "Hey, we're changing jobs. What does that mean for me or my job? My job is offering me sort of a loan forgiveness type of a program. What does that mean for our options now?" And I tell them when that happens, you don't have to worry about a, a huge bill.

**Alan Moore:** So essentially you're offering sort of the initial comprehensive financial plan, where it covers all of the, the, all of the various topics, and then they can choose to self implement or ultimately hire you to assist with implementation and, and be sort of that ongoing coach.

What is sort of your typical fee structure for that initial plan and then for the ongoing work?

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Mm-hmm. Well, of course I took Arlene's advice. She's wonderful.

**Alan Moore:** Double your fee, I, I guess, is what that means.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right, right. And so, my lowest fee right now, my base fee is \$5,000 for a plan.

**Alan Moore:** Okay.

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**Terry Bradford-Crane:** So, you know, it's, it's probably on the lower side of the, you know, one or two standard, you know, one standard deviation of each, each side. So \$5,000 for a plan, and then the minimum ongoing subscription fee now is \$150 per month.

And I had to— especially with the kind of business I'm doing and the, and the flexibility I've offered myself, quite honestly, and I don't want to digress too much—but I had to convince myself that I was not an imposter, Alan. Right? So, just because I'm not doing it, you know, 100 hours a week doesn't mean that I'm not good at what I do, or I could be crappy at what I do, but it certainly doesn't mean that I don't deserve to be compensated for what I'm bringing to the table.

And so, that is where my fees are right now, and I've been inching them up over the past three years.

**Alan Moore:** That's awesome. No, and, and I, I do, I, I wonder if folks who are not a hundred percent of their time in the business for, for whatever reason, if they, do struggle more with imposter syndrome. It's certainly something we hear across the board from, from members as they're getting started of just, you know, in recognizing that so much of the, I would say all of it is in our head, like our clients appreciate what we do.

There's a reason they pay us, there's a reason that we have such great client retention rates. And it's because we provide a really valuable service. But it is, it's a hurdle. Like I don't, I don't mean to discount that at all. It is a hurdle that I think many of us have had to deal with of just "Am I good enough? Am I worth this fee? You know, no one's going to pay me this fee."

And then, and yeah, and then one day you wake up and you're on a wait list and you're like, "What happened? Like, where this come from?" So I'm curious sort of longer term, as you're looking forward, cause you mentioned

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you've got kids graduating college now, you've really transitioned back to the planning firm and focus there. What, what are you trying to build with the business? What do you hope that it looks like in three to five years? Where do you want to be with it?

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Wow. In three to five years, I want to be in a situation where I am doing this full-time and traveling the country with my husband in our aircraft from—cause it's all virtual. I have the benefit of starting virtual. So I did start off virtual in 2018—and just and being able to be at peace giving people what I didn't have growing up. And, and being compensated for it.

You notice I'm talking more about the touchy feely aspects of enjoying what I'm doing. Not necessarily, "Oh, I want to make X amount of dollars," because I firmly believe that, that is not where the happiness is. I do want to make money and I do, and I want to be compensated for what I do, but I want to feel good about it, and I don't want to be exhausted, and I don't want to pick up a phone when someone calls and just be like, "Oh, it's this person again. But I have to be nice because, I got to pay my life." Right?

Right. So, you know, that's where I want to be. I want to be financially independent and, but in the process, teaching other people to be the same way. And not have to, you know, and I want my kids to be okay with where they are financially too. So my vision of success in this business is a slightly different because my priority has been, I don't know, maybe it's not slightly different, but my priority has been my kids all this time—my kids and my family—and as I see them branching out and being financially okay themselves, I, it feels like the plan, it's taken a while cause it takes, you know, 20 years to get them out of the house. But, but, but that is part of the success.

**Alan Moore:** The listeners know we're a huge fan of EOS, Entrepreneurial Operating System here, and the, the creator of EOS— his name Gina

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Wickman—and he's written a handful of books, but one of his most recent ones is called EOS Life. And I love it because he talks about what ultimately help, like what ultimately leads to happiness.

And if you don't have these things, it leads to burnout. And I think it's so interesting. So there's six sort of component or five components that lead to your ideal life and it's doing work you love with people you love, making a huge difference, being compensated appropriately, and still having time for other passions.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Yep.

**Alan Moore:** And it sounds like a pipe dream, but the beauty of being an entrepreneur is you get to really work towards that. And, and, and that, I mean, really what you're describing for yourself is that. It's not about being compensated to the absolute max and making as much money as possible. He didn't say that, he said, "Compensate appropriately." And that is up to you in terms of what you feel like your time is worth. When you get paid, do you think, "Okay, I feel good about that." Or like, "Wow, I did not charge enough or I'm being undercut here."

But like, again, like work you love with people you love cause just being surrounded by folks you want to work with and not having to work with customers or clients, or with employees that you don't enjoy. But that last one too of having time for other activities, other hobbies, and that's what I, I see so many financial planners making that mistake of just capping out on, on income. And it's like, "Great, but do you actually have time to spend your money?" Like-

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right, and-

**Alan Moore:** So, yeah, so that's going to be a really amazing— I don't want to call it encore career cause you're not there yet—but it's like this, like third

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career in a way of, you know, the ability to make great money, travel the, the country in, in your aircraft with your husband and, and, and have a real impact.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Yeah. Yeah. And I think, you know, just as a sidebar, especially when I think about the whole imposter thing: One thing I really had to understand is that there's a time for everything, and I always went back to what my priorities were. So I had to stop comparing myself to classmates who are admirals and generals right now. Classmates who are, or peers who are in the astronaut program right now, or, women who are in the C-suite someplace because I can think to myself, "Well, that could have been very well an avenue that you went down, but you didn't." And because I, I can feel good about that. After kind of beating myself up a little bit because I maintained my priorities, and, and this business allowed me to do that. And I can sit here and, and smile when I think about my kids.

Trust me, they all were teenagers. There's, it's, it's, it's stuff that happened today, tomorrow, or again, right? So, there were challenges and there's, there's challenges to sticking to your priorities because there are things you can't go for. There's the podcast I couldn't do. There's the opportunity to teach that I couldn't take.

But in the end, ultimately, like you said, I'll get to hopefully in a few years, travel with my husband, teach, and help other people have what I didn't have growing up.

**Alan Moore:** I love that point because I, I think it is so easy to, to play the comparison game and, and you, we just don't know what's under the hood of what we're comparing ourselves to and how many, how many folks made it to admiral and thought, "Gosh, why did I do this?"

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They kind of wake up one day and you're like, "my pri- like, I didn't follow my dreams, I didn't follow my priorities. I really wish I had what Terry has." And it's so easy to play that game of back and forth.

And I commend you on spending the time and energy on figuring out what you really want, and I think that's the hardest thing. I mean, I think we take for granted that we're like, "All right, clients, what do you want out of life? Oh, you want to retire at 55? Okay, let's move on." No, like what really drives 'em? What really are their passions and their motivations? And whatever they tell you in the first meeting is not, it's not there yet. You got to keep digging and keep digging. It takes years sometimes, you know, and, and a lot of therapy and meditation or whatever your path is to figure this out. And, and it's hard work, but you can't ultimately be happy until you know what, what you want out of life because otherwise you're just going to keep doing the wrong thing, so.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** I decided to ask myself the questions that I ask my clients.

**Alan Moore:** Hmm. I love that.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Ask, you know, ask yourself the questions you ask your clients, and then, and, and see where you end up. And not just for finance, right? Not just the money. We don't want to see just the statements. We want to understand what's going on with them, what makes 'em tick. I always tell them like, "Look, it's like a—your financial plan, my thought process when I'm working with you is like I'm trying to solve a Rubik's cube—I'm trying to solve a Rubik's cube and sometimes you get one side figured out, and then you got to mess it up to get the other side and figure that out. And, and so it's a, it's a process and, and listen to yourself.

You listen to your clients, do yourself the same favor.

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**Alan Moore:** I love that. I truly believe like being the student of our own art. And, you know, whether you do it for yourself or hire, hire your own financial planner, it is amazing what happens when you're in the other seat being asked those questions where you're like, "Oh man, I used to, I'm going to have to change the way I asked that question to cause this is tough," and, and really understand.

But again, you know, really getting that for yourself.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Right.

**Alan Moore:** Well, Terry, as we're coming up on the, on the end of our time together, I'll ask you the final question, and that is, you know, if there's one piece of advice, one thing, one thing you wish you could go back and tell your younger self, what do you think that piece of advice would be?

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Oh my gosh.

What would I tell myself? I would tell myself that you're okay.

**Alan Moore:** Hmm.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** You're okay. And you don't have to be what other people believe that you need to be. Whether it's what they expect of you career-wise or what they expect of you as a mom or a professional financial planner, you don't have to do the same road that other people do.

You don't, or traverse, you don't have to do that. It's a journey. It's like I say on my website, it's a, it's a waypoint. Everybody has different waypoints along their journey and everybody encounters different storms and they have to course correct and they have to pull out the navigation tools and they have to pull out the correct navigation tool.

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Each person has their own voyage and, and waypoints have different significance for different people. And you need to give yourself room to be one of those people. That's what I would say.

**Alan Moore:** I love it. Well, Terry, thank you so much for taking the time to come on the show and, and share your journey, and, and all the things that, that you've been able to accomplish and, and the awesome financial planning firm that you're building now. So thank you for your time today.

**Terry Bradford-Crane:** Thank you for having me.